

GIANT ASTEROID SET TO NARROWLY

MISS EARTH

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by

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A giant asteroid will only just miss earth later this year, according to NASA.

The huge rock, dubbed YU55, will pass within 201,700 miles of our planet in November [2011].

If it crashes into earth the impact would be equivalent to 65,000 atomic bombs, while the crater would be six miles wide and 2,000 ft deep.

The asteroid, which weighs 55 million tons and is 1,300ft wide, will be the largest ever object to get so close to our planet. It orbits the sun every 14 months.

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It will be closer to us than the moon, which is on average 238,855 miles away and will be visible through a small telescope.

The best times to view it will be between 23:28 on 8 November [2011] and 07:13 on 9 November [2011] (UK time).

According to NASA spokesman Dave Yeomans, there is no chance YU55 will crash into earth... for the time being. He said in statement: "YU55 poses no threat of an Earth collision over, at the very least, the next 100 years."

He added: "During its closest approach, its gravitational effect on the Earth will be so minuscule as to be immeasurable. It will not affect the tides or anything else."

Nonetheless, it has been officially labeled a 'potentially hazardous object' by the space agency.

YU55 was discovered by Robert McMillan, head of the NASA-funded Spacewatch Program at the University of Arizona in 2005, but it's not the only 'near-earth object' they are monitoring.

NASA are also keeping tabs on WN5, an asteroid that will pass the planet in 2028, and '99942 Apophis', a celestial body measuring 1,200 ft which could zoom past us on April 13 2036.

They also believe an even bigger asteroid has a one-in-a-thousand chance of colliding with earth in 2182.

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